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XXXIII. THE ACCENTUATION OF OLD FRENCH LOANWORDS IN ENGLISH

The old explanation of the modern English accentuation of Old French loanwords (via Anglo-French) as due to the analogy of Germanic stress has been regarded by several investigators with suspicion. It is too summary. Jespersen¹ is not satisfied with it because of the existence of many end-stressed words in English, such as *begin, forget*, and proposes several explanations of his own. Van Draat² takes issue with some of these, but also regards the old explanation as incomplete. Tamson³ attempts to deduce some regularity from occurrences of varying accentuations in late Middle English poetry.

It is true that from the earliest times Latin loanwords (i. e., popular words) in the Germanic languages come down to us in forms that prove first-syllable stress to have been the rule with them as with the inherited Germanic words. Nevertheless, it is not safe to conclude that the accent of all loanwords was habitually shifted to the first syllable, because there was in Old Latin a strong first-syllable stress, and we do not know what rôle this may have played in the Germanic treatment of the loanwords. It is certain, at any rate, that the Vulgar Latin dialects of a much later period show persistent traces of a first-syllable stress.

Was an early Latin loanword, when taken into Germanic, clearly felt to be, for instance, paroxytone like *acētum*, and did it later shift its accent to the first syllable (**ákit*) in conformity with the inherited Germanic words; or was the Old Latin first-syllable stress (perhaps the origin of the

¹ *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, 105; *Modern English Grammar*, 5. 52.

² *Rhythm in English Prose*, *Anglia* 36, 1-59.

³ *Word Stress in English*, Halle 1898.

later Vulgar Latin secondary stress: **acēto*) the starting point for the Germanic accentuation?

The Germanic accent has been remarkably stable. Once fixed on a certain syllable in a given word (cf. the inseparable prefixes) it does not shift to some other syllable, in genuine Germanic words. Variations like *cāthēdra*: *cathēdra*, *intēgrum*: *intēgrum*, *spīritum*: *spīritum* do not occur in Germanic dialects. And after a word, from any source, had become thoroughly naturalized in the language, it is hard to believe that any but the rarest scholars could ever have thought of it as not a native word.

It seems to me doubtful that there have ever been general shifts in the first accentuation of foreign loanwords in Germanic. It seems much more likely that truly popular words have retained the accent where it was, or was felt to be, for one reason or another, when these words first became current in popular speech. Later loanwords like *machine*, *bouquet*, used for generations by all ranks of society, show not the faintest sign of a tendency to shift the accent; and if still more recent *chauffeur* and *garage* have acquired first-syllable stress, it is due to the perfectly obvious analogy of words like *driver*, *butler*, *carriage*. The hesitation in words like *decadent* has, of course, nothing to do with the question, since these are learned words. Where we have been able to observe the process, Germanic stress alone has been powerless to shift an established accentuation. If it ever did operate in this way, it has long ceased to do so.

Germanic phrase rhythm (suggested by Jespersen and van Draat) can hardly have been responsible for any particular accentuation of loanwords, since it did not affect native words. Phrase rhythm in English has always been (at least since Middle English times) a matter of word order and choice of words; that is, a particular word will be avoided or placed elsewhere if it would not fit the rhythm of a particular passage, in artistic prose or in verse; but its *accent* is fixed, whatever the position of the word. The practice of Middle English poets in this respect will be discussed later.

Preliminary analysis of our problem in Middle English shows that

(a) French words do not appear in ME texts in any considerable number before the middle of the thirteenth century;⁴

(b) the present accentuation was fixed before the first traces of the vowel-shift in ME appear, since words like *counsel* have the complete development of the accented vowels (e. g., $\bar{u} > au$, beginning in the fourteenth century);

(c) the usage of the ME poets often belies facts evident from the vowel developments;

(d) many Old French loanwords to-day do not have the accent on the first syllable.

Let us examine these points and their implications in detail.

The fact that French words do not make their appearance in considerable numbers before the middle of the thirteenth century does not allow much time for such a striking development as a complete inversion of accentuation, which would necessarily have come about, as Behrens remarks,⁵ quite gradually; for this process must have been finished by the middle of the fourteenth century, when we find the first indications of the vowel-shift, affecting *only* the *accented* vowels. A century seems hardly sufficient time for the change.

Besides, the appearance of a French word in an English document at a certain date does not prove that it was current among the unlettered populace at that date; while a phonetic development recorded in a document is evidence that the word was so current, because phonetic developments begin usually at the bottom of the social order and take a long time to gain recognition in writing.

It is likely, on the contrary, that many French words would appear in written documents at an earlier date than that at

⁴ Mettig, *Engl. Stud.* 41, 177, gives eight per cent for the period 800-1258; Jespersen, *Growth and Str.*, 95, reckons one-half of one per cent before 1150, two per cent before 1200.

⁵ *Beiträge*, *Franz. Stud.* 5, II, 63.

which they became thoroughly current in the speech of the masses, because those who had achieved the art of writing in medieval England are pretty certain to have come into close contact with the official and aristocratic language, while it is unthinkable that the masses could have been in any sense bi-lingual. It may thus be safe to assume, for most documents, that the date of the first appearance of a French word is at least not much *later* than the date of its adoption into the speech of the masses.

The usage of the Middle English poets as to the accentuation of French words seems to be based solely on metrical convenience. From the *Owl and Nightingale* to Chaucer and even later, literally countless examples of wavering occur where the real accentuation cannot be doubted, since it conditions the vowel changes, as in *diuers: diuërs, merci: merct, sésun: sesún*. Chaucer's *victorie: victórië* cannot represent a popular variation. The Middle English poets had, on the other hand, plenty of precedents in French poetry for free accentuation of French words. It would be idle to bring modern theories of French metrics into this discussion, because we cannot imagine that any such considerations entered the heads of men like Langland and Chaucer: they must have read French verse just as they read English verse, with so and so many theses and so and so many arses; that is, an iambic pentameter line like

Cumpainz Rollanz, car sunez vostre corn

could not fail to call for an accent on the first syllable of *sunez*, to their ears, while in the cases of *cumpainz* and *Rollanz* the accent would fall on the last syllable, and so on. Examples are so numerous and so obvious that it seems unnecessary to stress this point further. The Middle English poets felt at liberty to place a French word in any convenient position in a line, regardless of its accentuation in prose, hence with an accent anywhere, since they saw, or thought they saw, French poets doing just this. Their usage is therefore entirely detached from the actual popular accentuation

of the same words, and cannot serve as the basis for a discussion of popular developments.

The great number of truly popular Anglo-French loanwords which are still accented (in English) on some other syllable than the first must be explained. They fall into two main classes: the first, those in which we can trace the operation of principles which would have prevented first-syllable stress in inherited Germanic words, namely, verbal compounds, and other words influenced by them; and the second, those whose accentuation cannot conceivably be based on any Germanic principle and must therefore be due to some French phenomenon or other, reflected somehow in the language of the non-French-speaking masses.

The words that were unconsciously felt by the English populace to be verbal compounds, or that were treated in an analogous manner, may easily be disposed of. On any theory they could not have first-syllable stress. This would be the case when either element was in common use, or was frequent in other compounds; thus the composite nature of words like *receive*, *deceive* would be clearly recognized.

We cannot make a clean-cut division here because, first, a number of words that ought certainly to have been recognized as compounds nevertheless accent the first syllable, for instance *ensign*, *profit*, *purchase*, *purpose*; and second, the English (Germanic) distinction in accent between verbal and nominal compounds (*overflow*: *overflow*) is not consistently carried out: *purchase*, n. and v.; *escape*, n. and v.; *offend*: *offense*; *incense*, n.: *incense*, v.; *perfect*, adj.: *perfect*, v.

In discussing popular recognition of compound words, we must not lose sight of the fact that aphetic forms like *scape*, *prentice*, *pert*, *fend*, *dropsy* (<*ydropeci*), *gin* (<*engin*) were due to an English pronunciation of the full French forms (some of which also persist), and hence these short forms were not responsible for the feeling that the fuller forms were compounds; in other words the weak first syllable must be older than the aphetic forms, not the reverse.

Tamson⁶ explains the accent of words like *apparel* and *a(d)vantage* as due to recognition of their compound nature. I do not see how the masses could have etymologized such words, even vaguely, as compounds. The insertion of the *d* in *advantage*, *adventure*, *admonish* is late, from fifteenth century French spellings (*NED*). Furthermore, where there were three or more syllables the original French accentuation (last syllable) must necessarily have thrown a secondary accent ("*accentuation binaire*") on the first syllable (**àd-van-tàge*, not **advàntàge*), as in the English verb *overflow*. This group of words will be fully discussed later.

At any rate, whether this widespread aphaeresis was entirely a Norman phenomenon, or due in part also to English influences, the existence and retention of doublets (full and aphetic forms) certainly can not serve as evidence of a tendency to first-syllable accent in English.

Naturally we find popular etymology playing a rôle in words like *ambush*, *andiron*, *abridge*, and perhaps also in *benign*, *disciple*, if these last were really popular and do not rather reflect a learned accentuation. In any case, words popularly felt to be compounds are subject to special laws which dismiss them from further discussion here.

The other class of words which do not have first-syllable stress must now be considered. Many of them, if we assume, for the present, French end stress as the starting point, are covered by Jespersen's reminder⁷ that we regularly find, in English words, an alternation of accented and unaccented syllables. He would have this principle apply to phrases like *the king's cousin* and *cousin mine*, causing, first, a different accentuation in the two cases, *cousin* and *cousin* respectively to allow an unaccented syllable to intervene between the two accents; after which first-syllable accent would gradually become standard, due to Germanic tendency. It may well seem questionable whether an esthetic principle of this kind could have found such universal application in

⁶ *Word Stress in English*, p. 115.

⁷ *Modern English Grammar*, I, 5. 41 ff.

vulgar speech as to stabilize the new accentuation of the *same* syllable in *all* such words, and so quickly (within a century or so). It would seem more likely that the varying rhythm of different phrases should, if anything, prevent any feeling for fixed accent in these words, perhaps even giving doublets in modern English, as is the case with some non-popular words, having double vowel development. It is hard to see why an inconvenient stress on such a word should not have been avoided by placing it in another position, as would have been done with words like *forgotten*, without shifting the accent.

The principle of alternating thesis and arsis ("accentuation binaire") did, however, apply to individual words of more than two syllables, like *maintenance*, *a(d)miral*, *element*, *authority*, *familiarity*, *grammarian*. But it is important to note that such words—big, strange words—are not of the type the Anglo-Saxon used in everyday speech. Most of them were probably unintelligible to the common Englishman; at least, it is fair to assume that they never formed a sufficiently intimate part of his speech to share the phonetic treatment of homelier words. We shall not be surprised to find that the accentuation of polysyllables, used no doubt almost exclusively by persons who had been taught French, or Anglo-French, seems to proceed from the original French end stress, moving forward by skipping a syllable, in the English way, and eventually becoming the primary stress on the first part of the word, whether first or second syllable depending upon the number of syllables from the end. Hence these words also are disposed of.

There are a few polysyllables whose accentuation is strikingly at variance with the foregoing type: *abeyance*, *a(d)monish*, *a(d)vantage*, *a(d)venture*, *apparel*, *attorney*, *avouter* (*adulter*), *environ*, *establish*, *imagine*. If these words were less current than the last type (with two or more accents, paragraph above) they might serve to illustrate a half way stage in the forward "shift" of accent; but, on the contrary, some of them express very common ideas for which English equivalents

are hard to find. Nor can they have been conceived of as compounds by the English. Their accentuation is neither analogical Germanic nor theoretical French, but due to some other principle, as we shall presently see, operating in popular speech.

Lastly we must eliminate purely bookish words, including legal and clerical words. Learned words generally fail to conform to popular laws. Examples are *benison*, *devout*, *entail*, *exchequer*, *emperor* (cf. *NED*), and so on. Many of them might also be classed elsewhere. The possibility of direct Latin or Greek influence is often present.

We have left a list of words we may assume, for the purpose of discussion, to have been genuinely popular, current, naturalized in the language of the untutored masses, from Anglo-French, at a sufficiently early date to enable them to share in the vowel-shift; furthermore, words which were not felt, so far as we can see, to be compounds; and finally, words whose accent is independent of the English tendency to alternate stressed and unstressed syllables. We may conclude that this residue should furnish reliable statistics as to the accentuation and reliable evidence as to the principles governing it.

Words beginning with a consonant regularly accent the first syllable. Where second-syllable accent occurs, it is in accordance with the rules cited above:⁸ obvious compounds: *betray*, *contain*, *convey*, *debate*, *defeat*, *deliver*, *disdain*, *maintain*, *perfect*, *portray*, *purvey*, *receive*, *succeed*, *survey*, *sustain*, *vouchsafe*; cases showing the alternation of thesis and arsis: *courageous* (four syllables), *delicious*, *maintenance*, *perpetual*, *remedy*, *remnant* (for *remanent*); learned influence

⁸ Words like *comfort*, *compass*, *profit*, *promise*, *purchase*, *purpose*, *rescue*, *respite*, *retail*, *surcoat*, *surfeit*, with first-syllable accent, are difficult by the side of *compare*, *proceed*, *purvey*, *relief*, *detail*, *surmount*; but these lean in the direction of first-syllable accent, that is, first-syllable accent is only more consistently carried out here than we should expect, so that the difficulties in this case are not very disturbing. These exceptions may point to the conclusion that the force of analogy has been neither very strong nor very consistent in fixing accentuation.

is probably reflected (unless in some cases popular etymology operated) in the irregularity of *benign*, *malign*, *cathedral*, *disciple*, *minute* (Latin, adj., cf. popular *minute*, n.), *relic*.

While it is possible to generalize on words beginning with a consonant, it seems worth while in the case of those beginning with a vowel to collect as complete a list as possible, at least a representative list, and to attempt a more thorough classification, because here the reasons for the place of the accent are not always so evident.

We shall exclude, as before, real and fancied compounds, such as *acquit*, *affray* (cf. perhaps *fray*, v., OF *frayer*, "rub" *NED*), *afraid* (pple. of last), *agree* (cf. *degree*), *allay*, *allot*, *allure*, *arrear*, *arrest* (*em*)bezzle, (*em*)broider (cf. *broid*, *braid* *NED*); polysyllables of the type *maintenance*; and learned words. Let us examine the residual list.⁹

The accent, in a strikingly large number of these words beginning with a vowel, is on the second syllable: *abase*, *abash*, *abandon*, *abate*, *abeyance*, *abound*, *achieve*, *adieu*, *admonish*, *adorn*, *advance*, *adventure*, *advice* (in the last five the *d* is late, cf. *NED*), *affair*, *alarm*, *alas*, *allege*, *allow*, *ally*, *amend*, *anneal*, *annoy*, *apert*, *apparel*, *appeal*, *appear*, *arraign*, *arrive*, *assail*, *assault*, *assay*, *assess*, *attorney*, *avaunt*, *aver*, *endow*, *enhance*, *entire*, *environ* (not felt as compound because consistently used with prepositions *by*, *in*, *NED*), *escape*, *escheat*, *eschew*, *espouse*, *espy*, *essay* (v.), *establish*, *estate*, *estrangle*, *imagine*, *inveigle* (F. *aveugler*), *obey*, *oblige*, *overt* (cf. *covert*, with first-syllable accent, as beginning with a consonant).

The great predominance of words beginning with *a* may be due in part to the analogy of English locutions like *ago*,

⁹ Based on the *Wortregister* in Behrens *Beitr.* with additions from Skeat's *Rough Lists* and Brüll, *Untergangene u. veraltete Worte des Franz. im heut. Englisch*, Posen 1912, hence including only words taken into English while Anglo-French was still spoken in England. Only words now current in English, whose accentuation cannot therefore be questioned, are here given. The list lays no more claim to completeness than the sources indicate. For Skeat's *Lists* cf. *Trans. Philol. Soc.*, Lond. 1880-1, App. V, p. 93.

alive, away, a-fishing and verbs like *awake*; so perhaps *alarm, avault*, for instance; but it is hard to see how even popular etymology could have extended this analogy to other words like *annoy, apparel, attorney*, and so on, not used in a manner reminiscent of these English phrases. And if the attempt be made to cut down the list still further on the ground that certain other words may have been felt as compounds (cf. *NED* s. v. *inveigle*), the objection at once arises: what could the component parts have meant? On the other hand, of all French words beginning with vowels, and fulfilling our conditions, the greatest number begin with *a*, far fewer with *e*, and so on, so that the proportions in our list are not far from representing the actual condition of the French vocabulary.

A number of words beginning with a vowel and having first-syllable accent must be considered separately, for various reasons. Thus the Latin loanword *abbot* must have influenced *abbey, abbess*; *angel* and *altar* are simply modifications of Latin loanwords found in Anglo-Saxon; *equal* is Latin, not French; *err, error, errant, arrant* must have been grouped together, if popular; *offer* is a Latin loanword found in Anglo-Saxon;¹⁰ learned words are perhaps *almond, alter*

¹⁰ It may not be too venturesome to associate *advent, aloes, article, idol* (*ideles* is the form in Behrens' list), *image* (*ymage*), *office, (offiz), olive*, which appear in Behrens as coming from Anglo-French, with pre-conquest words taken more or less directly from Latin, such as *abbot, altar, angel* (A-S *engel*), *apostle, offer* (A-S *offrian*), because of the first-syllable accent of the former group, otherwise hard to explain. Our oldest Latin loanwords, as *engel*, came into English *aurally*, from the speech of persons who used (Vulgar) Latin as a living language, often as their mother tongue, for instance the *mercatores* and the early missionaries, so that the English hearers who made these words their own must have adopted the sounds and accentuation current at the time in Vulgar Latin, and these would persist in English, under English laws. But such pre-conquest words as are too late to have been heard directly from the lips of persons speaking Vulgar Latin as a living language passed through a process which involves, at some stage or other, learning these foreign words from the written form, that is through learned mediation. In this latter process the visual impression was not controlled by constant corrections impressed upon the ear, or at best was guided only

(v., cf. popular *change*), *alum*, *ancient*, *author*, *autumn*, *ensign*, *entrails*, *exile*, *incense* (n.), *incest*, *infant*, *inquest* (cf. *request*, *bequest*, *quest*), *issue*, *odour*; some were monosyllabic in French, or were made from monosyllabic roots: *archer*, *armor*, *eager*, *eagle* (and *eaglet*, *egret*), *enter*, perhaps *idol* (OF *idele*, *idle*, *NED*), *order*, *oyster*, *usage*; some were polysyllabic: *ocean*, *urchin* (Norm. *ériçon*, *hériçon*; the consonant form may have played a part); *anguish* may have been re-accented to match *finish*, *punish* and the rest; *ostrich* to match the more familiar *partrich*, *partridge*; *ointment* goes like *payment*, *raiment* and so on; *auburn* underwent a striking sense development, and seems to be a special case in several respects (cf. *NED*); *ermine*, like *urchin*, might have been influenced by the form with initial *h*; *outrage* was popularly etymologized *out*+*rage*; *ewer* followed the analogy of *pitcher*, *platter*, *saucer*; in *eyelet* (F *œillet*) the first element was translated, making an apparently Germanic compound; *usher* is a clear *nomen agentis*, like *butler*; *umpire* is for *numpire* (Skeat, *Etym. D.*); which leaves the following with, for the present, anomalous first syllable accent: *ague*, *engine* (but cf. *gin*), *envy*, perhaps *olive*, *onion*, *oyer* (in “*oyer and terminer*,”¹¹ and the uncommon word *ullage*).

From this grouping of our loanwords it appears that *those beginning with a consonant*, when free to follow popular laws, have consistently *first-syllable* accent; but that among *those beginning with a vowel*, and free to follow popular laws, a strikingly large proportion, I believe a considerable majority (from my lists the proportion is roughly 8:1), *appear with second-syllable* accent.

Was there any motive or tendency in English or in French

by school traditions becoming ever more vague and less trustworthy, and it is natural that inaccuracies and inconsistencies should become fixed. Germanic accentuation may thus have been given to some of these learned Latin words, in the absence of another standard. If this be admissible, it may perhaps furnish the solution of the problem presented by the first list here. In any case they are not strictly popular.

¹¹ But see below, note 13.

that can explain this differentiation, so soon (within about a century) after the acquisition of these words?

Before attempting to answer this question, it will be well to investigate the process or processes of the acquisition itself. This was undoubtedly by ear, since the masses must have been illiterate. In any case, the vowel shift had begun before the circulation of printed books, so that eye or spelling pronunciations are not to be considered.¹²

One of the first processes of acquisition must have been the object method familiar in the schoolroom: a Norman servingman, for instance, curtly demanding a fowl for the table, and finally making the Saxon serf understand, by repetitions and gestures, that "poulette" meant "hen," and a nice, young one, too. Or perhaps the serf would ask the name of a chicken or a sheep, and be told that it was "poulette" or "mouton."

We can hardly believe that French conversation was ever understood in its entirety by the common folk of England; but no doubt words spoken emphatically or with emotional stress, so that they stood out in the sentence, would, after many repetitions, be caught and understood. In the same way, very common legal terms, such as were often used emphatically and clearly spoken, would gain currency. Words like *pardon* and *merci*, almost always used alone, and hence emphatic and clearly spoken, would readily be picked up. In short, the genuinely popular Anglo-French loanwords are those that were, in the spoken French, con-

¹² In spite of the passage in Higden's *Polychronicon* so often quoted, relative to "construing" in French in the schools, the situation probably was that French was used where French-speaking children predominated; but if, as seems hardly likely, French was expressly taught for the purpose of "construing" in schools where the children habitually used English, it must have been regarded by them as a mere classroom bore, to be got out of their heads as quickly as possible. Latin seems to have been the only language regularly taught in the English schools of the Middle Ages to which children of the populace were admitted. Cf. Rashdall, H., *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 1895, 2,459; Jackson, G. L., *The Privilege of Education*, Boston 1908.

spicuous, emotionally or by emphasis, those that were forcefully articulated, so that they could be detached from an otherwise unintelligible conversation; or else words frequently uttered alone.

Now an emphatic word or an emotional word (and single words are always one or the other) has a special accent in French. No Frenchman says, for instance, *mercé, pardón, attentión, parfaitement*; what he says is *mérci, pardon, faites attention* (or exceptionally, if uttered alone, *attention*), *parfaitement*, as everyone knows. And the same is true of emphatic or emotional words in connected discourse: a very conspicuous stress falls upon the first syllable of words beginning with a consonant, on the second syllable of words beginning with a vowel.¹³

It is unnecessary, for the purposes of this discussion, to consider the nature of the French accent in general; but the emphasis-emotional stress is so striking that it has misled even Frenchmen who attempted to describe their accentuation.¹⁴ It is so much clearer than the theoretical end stress that a Germanic hearer is often inclined to agree with Sweet when he says that the French accent is usually on the first syllable. P. Passy also observes the especially strong character of the "displaced" accent in emphatic words;¹⁵ while Grammont¹⁶ says: ". . . l'insistante attire notre attention au détriment de la rythmique (=tonic syllable) à tel point que . . . on peut croire parfois que cette dernière est désaccentuée."

Can this state of affairs have existed in the thirteenth

¹³ Bourciez, *Précis de phonétique française*, 9n., states the rule in this form. So also Grammont, *Traité pratique de prononciation française*, Paris 1914, p. 146, "accent d'insistance"; G. notes, besides this, an accent on the first syllable, even if it begins with a vowel, in case the word forms a complete "rhythmic element," of course a much rarer condition, as *attention* above, and, I suspect, *oyer* in our "*oyer and terminer*."

¹⁴ Bibliography in Viëtor, *Elemente der Phonetik*, 144 f. and notes.

¹⁵ *Les sons du français*, pp. 44, 81, 89 ff., 129 ff.

¹⁶ *Op. Cit.*, p. 142.

century in French? If so, it is the key to the problem before us.

Our earliest direct evidence on this point seems to be certain discrepancies and contradictions in statements by grammarians of the sixteenth century. Palsgrave, in his *Éclaircissement*, 1530, locates the accent (to his ear a higher pitch) on the last fully articulated syllable, this being, of course, the usual phenomenon. But Périon, 1554, and de Bèze, 1584,¹⁷ make such vague and contradictory statements as to the position of the accent that it is hard to understand exactly what they mean, beyond the certainty that they are trying to represent something, evidently in actual speech, very different from the normal phenomenon described by Palsgrave, and, of course, the basis for the earlier phonetic changes in the language. Further, H. Estienne¹⁸ says:

Il est certain que tout ce qui se prononce lentement, ou posément, ou pesamment . . . ne se prononce pas gravement: et qu'il est requis en quelques endroits, pour la gravité, que les parolles semblent aller de roideur: a quoi ceste prononciation-la est contraire.

I take these statements as implying that displacement of the normal accent occurred with some frequency, and was striking—so striking as to obscure the true facts; in short, the emotional or emphasis displacement. And I see no reason why the sixteenth, or any other century during the development of French, should be assigned as the earliest date for the origin of such a characteristic trait; on the contrary, this peculiar speech habit may well be of great antiquity.

So what the untutored Englishman heard in the words he could catch from the speech of his masters was, at the very outset, *first*-syllable stress in words beginning with a *consonant* and (nearly always) *second*-syllable stress in those that began with a *vowel*; and he quite naturally placed his own heavier

¹⁷ Their works were not accessible to me except the passages quoted in G. Paris, *Étude sur le rôle de l'accent latin* etc., Paris 1862, p. 17.

¹⁸ *La précellence du langage françois*, 1579, reprinted etc. by E. Huguet, Paris 1896, p. 43.

Germanic stress just there, barring certain instinctive syntactical considerations that called for different treatment. He could not generally distinguish the words running on normally with end stress (which probably was then, as it now is, comparatively slight), because, if he had heard and recognized end stress, or had been taught it (as later happened in words like *machine*), he would not have shifted this stress to another syllable; probably could not have fixed the habit of the changed stress, in any event, in so short a time as that between the dates of the loanwords and the vowel-shift. Our present accentuation of these words is therefore not an English development, but the continuation of a French phenomenon.

We have still to dispose of the possibility that the Norman dialect brought to England might have been influenced in the direction of first-syllable stress by the Norse element in the Norman population. This supposition would be open to the same objection as that of analogical Germanic stress originating in English usage, namely, that it must have affected *all* first syllables alike, whether beginning with a vowel or with a consonant, and under all circumstances; to say nothing of the strikingly different phonetic developments which must in that case have occurred in continental Norman. In the absence of such results, we must abandon this possibility.

CONCLUSION. Germanic stress was a static, not an active influence, at least so far as our Anglo-French loanwords are concerned; their accentuation was fixed by French emotional or emphasis stress; exceptions are due to instinctive syntactical considerations, more rarely to analogy, or else are not really popular words.

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